

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5376

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 5376 VICE 5375)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PN
SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: STATE 190452

1. I DELIVERED SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO MINISTER BOYD PERSONALLY THIS MORNING. HE READ IT CAREFULLY AND EXPRESSED THANKS FOR THIS EXPRESSION OF OUR VIEWS. HE SAID THAT HE AGREED THAT HIGHLY INFLAMMATORY TREATMENT OF THE CANAL ISSUE AT COLOMBO WOULD NOT BE DESIRABLE. HE SAID HE WOULD BE OPPOSED TO ANY USE OF RHETORIC SHARPLY CRITICAL OF THE U.S.

2. BOYD TOLD ME THAT WHAT PANAMA WILL SEEK--OR AT LEAST WHAT HE IS RECOMMENDING--WILL BE SUPPORT FROM THE NON-ALIGNED FOR PANAMA'S CAUSE VERY MUCH IN THE LANGUAGE AND TONE ADOPTED AT THE NAM IN LIMA LAST YEAR. THAT WOULD MEAN FULL SUPPORT FOR PANAMA'S CLAIM TO FULL SOVEREIGNTY OVER ALL ITS TERRITORY, INCLUDING THE CANAL ZONE. THERE WILL PROBABLY ALSO BE, AS AT LIMA AN EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR THE QUOTE AUTHENTICITY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS UNQUOTE INSTITUTED IN PANAMA BY THE TORRIJOS REGIME AND OPPOSITION TO ANY EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE THAT REGIME. BOYD SAID HE WOULD PREFER TO HAVE THE PANAMA ISSUE HANDLED AS PART OF THE TOTAL FINAL DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIAL

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THE COLOMBO MEETING RATHER THAN MAKING PANAMA AN ITEM OF SEPARATE DISCUSSION AND A SUBJECT OF A SPECIAL RESOLUTION. THAT, HE THOUGHT, WOULD HELP TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF IN-TEMPERATE SPEECHES AND RESORT TO EXTREME RHETORIC.

3. I TOLD BOYD THAT I HOPED HIS MODERATE APPROACH TO THIS SENSITIVE SUBJECT WOULD PREVAIL AND THAT THE GENERAL AND OTHERS WOULD NOT GET SWAYED BY THE FULSOME PRAISE AND ADULATION THEY COULD EXPECT FROM SOME QUARTERS IN SRI LANKA. I ASSURED HIM THAT ANY BITTERLY CRITICAL STATEMENTS AGAINST THE U.S. IN A NON-ALIGNED RESOLUTION ON PANAMA WOULD GENERATE A REACTION IN MY COUNTRY INIMICAL TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PANAMA'S MAIN GOAL--A NEW AND FAIR TREATY. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FULLY.

4. WITH REFERENCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, MENTIONED IN THIRD PARA OF THE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE, BOYD SAID THAT PANAMA HAD DECIDED THAT IT MUST BRING THE MATTER TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. HE INSISTED THAT THE PURPOSE WOULD NOT BE TO STIMULATE RESOLUTIONS SHARPLY ATTACKING THE U.S. BUT RATHER AGAIN TO BRING THE WORLD'S ATTENTION TO THE PANAMANIAN CAUSE. HE SAID THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE PERSUADED THAT THE RECENT DISCUSSION OF THE PANAMANIAN ISSUE DURING THE U.S. POLITICAL CAMPAIGN HAD RAISED PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND ELICITED MUCH SYMPATHY. THEY WERE EQUALLY PERSUADED THAT FURTHER DISCUSSION IN THE UN THIS FALL WOULD HAVE A SIMILAR POSITIVE EFFECT BY MAKING IT CLEAR THAT PANAMA'S STRUGGLE FOR FULL SOVEREIGNTY HAD THE UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF MOST OF THE WORLD. THAT, HE ARGUED, SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR ANY PRESIDENT TO JUSTIFY TO THE CONGRESS AND THE PEOPLE HIS REASONS FOR REACHING A MODERATE COMPROMISE WITH PANAMA ON THE CANAL PROBLEM.

5. I TOLD BOYD THAT I UNDERSTOOD HIS AND HIS COLLEAGUES FEELINGS ON THIS MATTER. BUT I URGED HIM NOT TO UNDERESTIMATE THE POTENTIAL FOR MISCHIEF ON THE PART OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE UN IN A DISCUSSION OF THE PANAMA ISSUE. SIMILARLY HE SHOULD NOT MISJUDGE THE STRONGLY ADVERSE REACTION HE COULD EXPECT FROM THE U.S. IF A UN DEBATE ON PANAMA TURNED INTO A CARNIVAL OF HATE AGAINST MY COUNTRY. CONFIDENTIAL

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IN ANY CASE, I SAID, I MOST STRENUOUSLY ADVISED AGAINST TAKING THE PANAMA ISSUE INTO THE UN BEFORE OUR ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER--AS THEY SEEMED TO BE ABOUT TO DO. ANY EFFORT TO USE DISCUSSION IN AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM TO INJECT THIS PRIMARILY BILATERAL ISSUE INTO OUR ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE A NEGATIVE REACTION FROM ALL CONCERNED. IF PANAMA WAS DEAD SET ON GOING TO THE UNGA TO ELICIT FURTHER BROAD WORLD SUPPORT,-- AND I SAID I WAS NOT PERSUADED IT WAS THE BEST COURSE--THEN I COULD ONLY ADVISE MOST EMPHATICALLY THAT IT NO DO SO BEFORE OUR ELECTIONS. BOYD SAID I HAD MADE A STRONG POINT, THAT I WAS PROBABLY RIGHT, AND HE WOULD GIVE IT THE FULLEST CONSIDERATION.

6. BOYD THEN SAID HE KNEW THAT I REALIZED--AND HE HOPED I WOULD REMIND MY COLLEAGUES IN WASHINGTON--THAT PANAMA HAD DEMONSTRATED TREMENDOUS RESTRAINT ON THE CANAL ISSUE DURING OUR POLITICAL CAMPAIGN PERIOD. THEY HAD TRIED TO DO EVERYTHING THEY COULD TO AVOID HAVING PANAMA BECOME A SOURCE OF POLEMICS AND EMOTION ON OUR POLITICAL SCENE. BUT HE SAID, AS MOST MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN SAYING FOR SOME TIME, THAT THIS RESTRAINT COULD NOT ENDURE MUCH LONGER. PANAMA FELT IT HAD TO PRESS ITS JUST DEMANDS--AND SRI LANKA AND THE UN WERE FORUMS WHERE THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED. THE IMPORTANT THING, HE SAID, IS FOR OUR TWO COUNTRIES TO CONTINUE THE SEARCH FOR A JUST TREATY JUST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE INDICATED HE FELT THIS SHOULD BE SOON AFTER THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION. HE NOTED, TOO, THAT THE PLATFORMS OF BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE U.S. HAD ENDORSED THE EFFORT TO REACH A NEW ACCOMMODATION. HE SAID ONE MAJOR ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED WAS THE QUESTION OF DURATION. IT WAS ABSOLUTELY CLEAR, HE SAID, THAT PANAMA CANNOT ACCEPT A TREATY THAT GOES BEYOND THE YEAR 2000. BUT ON ALL OTHER QUESTIONS. HE SAID PANAMA WOULD BE QUOTE VERY FLEXIBLE UNQUOTE. HE ALSO MENTIONED, WITHOUT EXPLAINING, PANAMA'S WILLINGNESS TO ENTERTAIN CERTAIN ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONTINUED U.S. INVOLVEMENT OR RESIDUAL INTEREST AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF A TREATY AT THE END OF THE CENTURY. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT AMBASSADOR BUNKER AND HIS TEAM WOULD BE WARMLY WELCOMED IN PANAMA AND THE SOONER THEY
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COULD COME, THE BETTER. I PROMISED TO RELAY HIS MESSAGE TO ALL CONCERNED. HE THEN THANKED ME ONCE AGAIN FOR THE MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY KISSINGER AND ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS WARMEST PERSONAL REGARDS. HE LOOKS FORWARD TO SEEING THE SECRETARY IN NEW YORK.

7. OTHER ITEMS WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY.
JORDEN

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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